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## COVID-19 STRESS CONTINUES TO DECLINE AMONG NH RESIDENTS

Prepared by: **University of New Hampshire**

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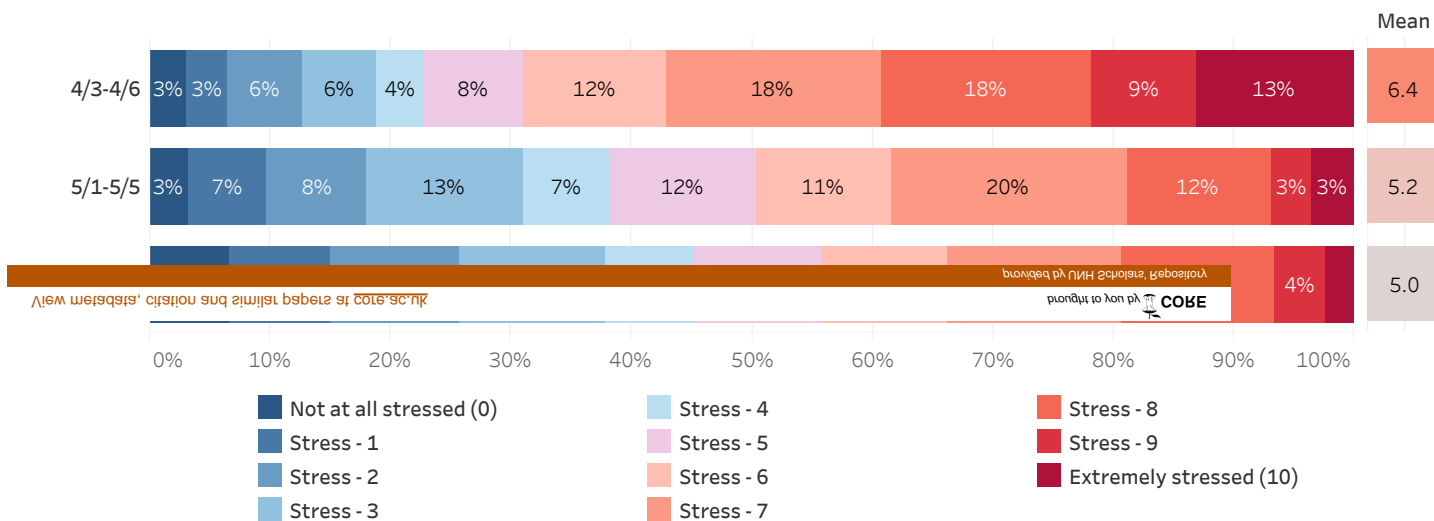
DURHAM, NH - Stress among New Hampshire residents related to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to decline. Those under thirty, women, and registered Democrats remain more stressed than others. Symptoms of anxiety and depression have also declined, most notably among young people, but remain higher than under typical circumstances. Granite Staters continue to feel considerable stress concerning their family's health and emotional well-being and the care and education of their children, but relatively few are concerned about their own health, their finances or job, or being able to access food or supplies. As the weather improves and restrictions ease, nearly half of residents now report exercising and spending time outdoors at least five days a week.

These findings are based on the **Dartmouth College-UNH Survey Center New Hampshire COVID-19 Study\***, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center in collaboration with the Department of Epidemiology at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. In the most recent iteration of the survey, seven hundred ninety-one (791) Granite State Panel members who had completed the baseline survey in early April completed a survey online between June 1 and June 4, 2020. Data were weighted by respondent sex, age, education, and region of the state to targets from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as party registration levels provided by the New Hampshire Secretary of State. The Granite State Panel is part of an effort by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center to investigate new ways of gathering and understanding the opinion of New Hampshire residents. Granite State Panel members are recruited from randomly-selected landline and cell phone numbers across New Hampshire and surveys are sent periodically to panel members.

### Overall Stress as a Result of COVID-19

Overall stress among New Hampshire residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to improve. When asked to place themselves on a 0-10 scale denoting their overall level of stress as a result of COVID-19, 19% place themselves at 8, 9, or 10, unchanged since early May (19%) but lower than early April (39%). A quarter (25%) currently place themselves at 6 or 7 on a 0-10 scale, 30% place themselves at 3, 4, or 5, and 26% place themselves at 0, 1, or 2, up slightly from 18% who placed themselves there in early May. The mean response is 5.0, down from 5.2 in early May and 6.4 in early April.

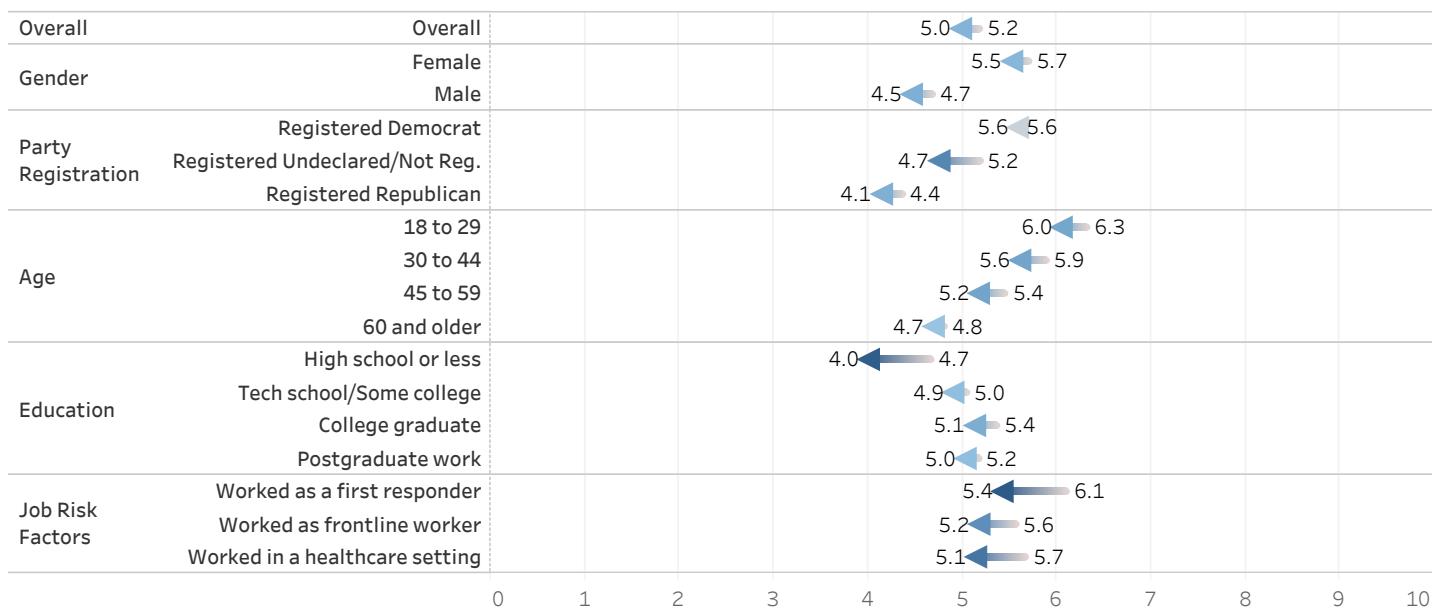
### Overall Stress



\* We ask that this copyrighted information be referred to as *the Dartmouth College-UNH Survey Center New Hampshire COVID-19 study*, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center and Dartmouth College.

As in earlier months, women, registered Democrats, those under the age of 45, and those with more than a high school education report slightly more stress than men, registered Republicans, those 45 and older, and those with a high school education. All of the following demographic groups report slightly lower levels of stress now than in early May. Stress has fallen since May by slightly more among those whose are registered as undeclared or not registered to vote and those with a high school education or less. Stress among those who have worked as a first responder or frontline worker or in a healthcare setting has declined considerably since May and are now close to stress levels among the general population.

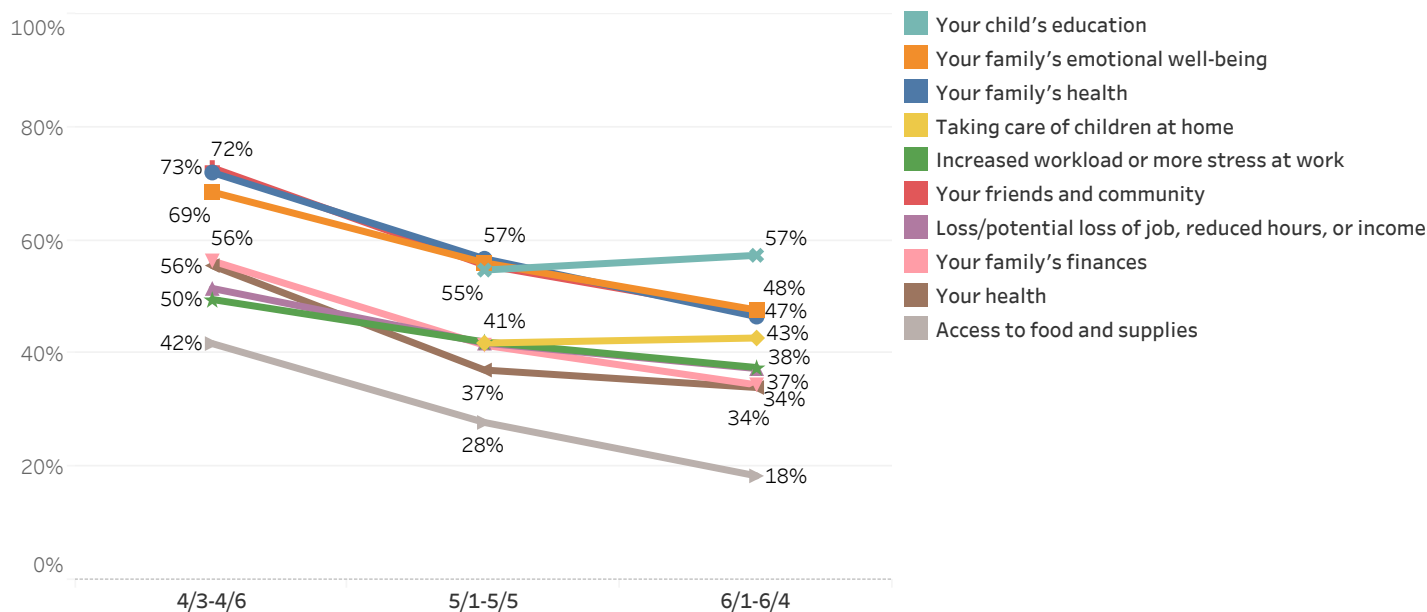
**Mean Overall Stress as a Result of COVID-19 Pandemic: Change from Early May to Early June**



Stress in most areas has declined considerably since early April. More than half (57%) of Granite Staters say they are extremely or somewhat stressed about their child's education, 48% are stressed about their family's emotional well-being, 47% each are stressed about their family's health and their friends and community, and 43% are stressed about taking care of children at home. Three in eight (38%) are extremely or somewhat stressed about an increased workload or more stress at work, while slightly fewer are stressed about a loss or potential loss of a job or reduced hours or income (37%), their family's finances (34%), or their health (34%), and only 16% are stressed about access to food and supplies.

Stress concerning children has slightly increased or stayed about the same since early May, while stress in all of the other following areas has declined since May. Stress has decreased most notably among respondents about their family's health (-10 percentage points) and access to food and supplies (-9).

**Extremely or Somewhat Stressed in the Following Areas**

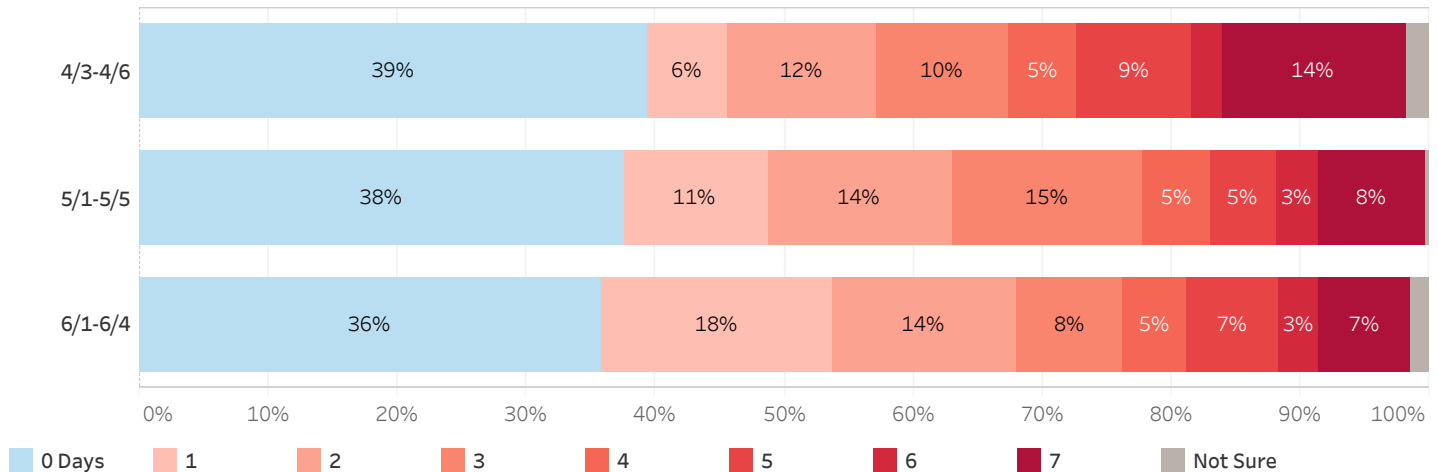


## Quality of Life

Most New Hampshire residents (63%) report having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep for at least one of the previous seven days, with 22% saying this happened to them four or more days. Despite a continued decline in stress, the number of respondents experiencing trouble falling asleep or staying asleep has slightly increased since early April.

As in early May, those under 30, women, and registered Democrats are more likely than men, registered Republicans, and those aged 60 and older to report having had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep for at least one of the previous seven days. Women and those under 30 are more likely than in early May to say they experienced this at least one of the previous seven days.

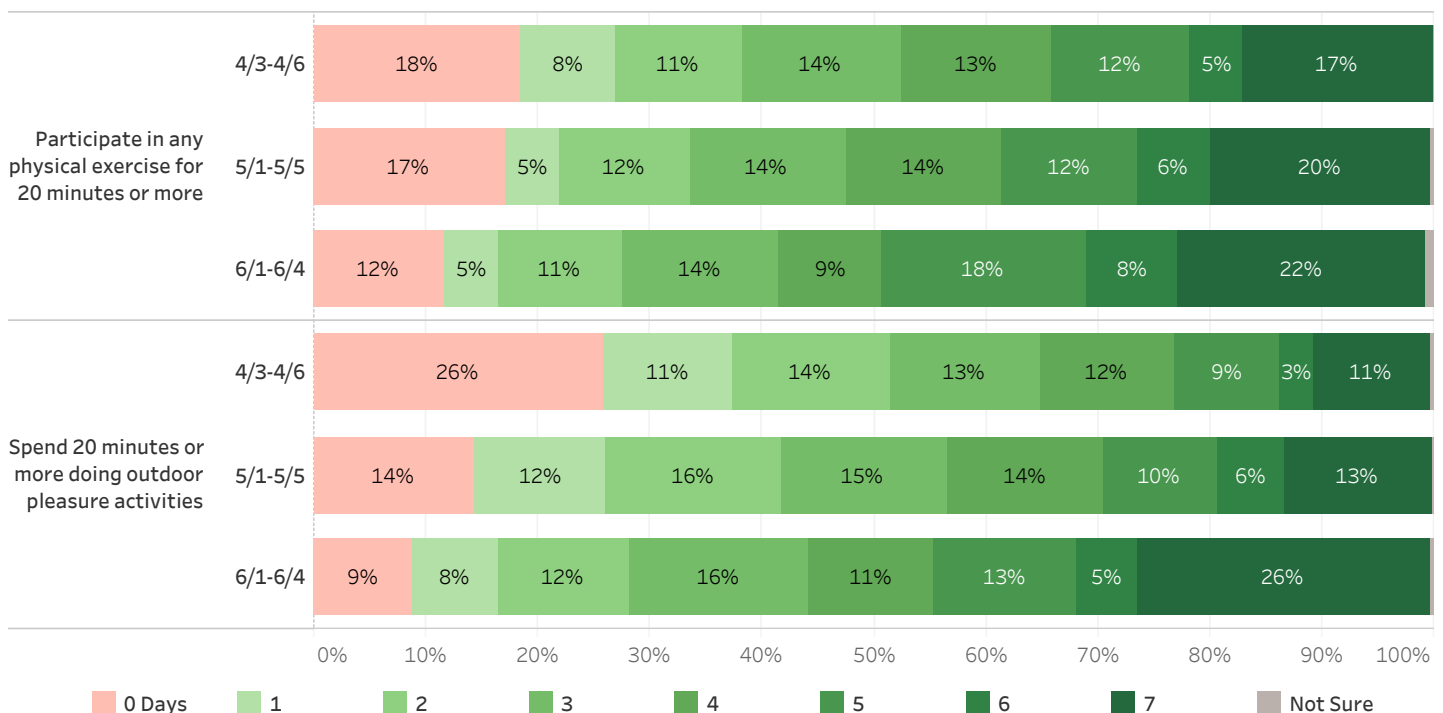
**Trouble Falling Asleep or Staying Asleep Over Previous Seven Days**



As the restrictions due to the pandemic ease, New Hampshire residents are exercising and spending time outdoors more often. Seven in eight (88%) Granite Staters report participating in physical exercise for 20 minutes or more on at least one day in the previous seven, up from 83% in early May and 81% in early April; nearly half (49%) have done so on at least five days of the previous seven, up from 38% in May and 34% in April.

Similarly, 91% spent 20 minutes or more doing outdoor pleasure activities at least one day in the previous seven and 44% have done so on five days or more, considerably higher than in May (29%) and April (23%).

**Physical Exercise & Spending Time Outdoors Over the Previous 7 Days**



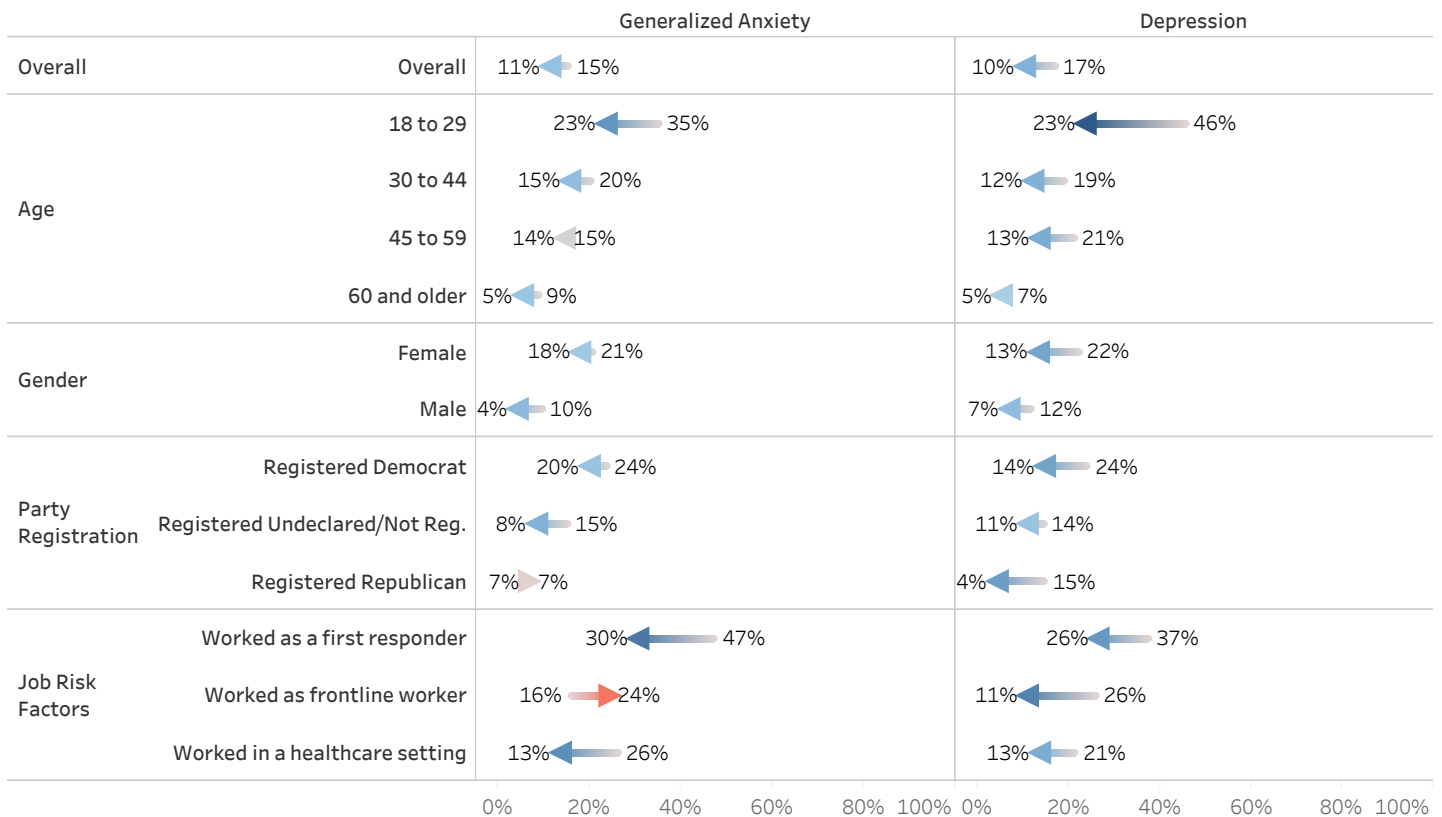
## Mental Health

Using a short standardized questionnaire designed to quickly screen for generalized anxiety and depressed mood\*, 11% of New Hampshire residents meet the threshold for identifying possible cases of generalized anxiety disorder, down from 15% in early May, and 10% meet the threshold for depression, down from 17% in early May.

For comparison, national past-year prevalence estimates for generalized anxiety and depression are 3% and 7% respectively\*\*. Using this scale, current anxiety among New Hampshire residents is more than three times as high as would be typical while depression is only slightly higher than under normal circumstances.

- Younger residents remain more likely than their older counterparts to be experiencing anxiety and depression but both have decreased substantially among young people since early May.
- Women continue to be more likely than men to be experiencing generalized anxiety and depression. Depression has declined considerably among women since early May but anxiety has declined only marginally.
- Registered Democrats remain more likely than registered Republicans to be experiencing anxiety and depression, but symptoms of each have declined by similar amounts among both groups since early May.
- Those who have worked as a first responder continue to experience far greater anxiety and depression than others, though feelings of both have declined since early May. Depression among those who have worked as a frontline worker has also declined, but feelings of generalized anxiety have increased. Those who have worked in a healthcare setting are now only slightly more likely than the general public to report depression or anxiety.

### Mental Health - By Demographics: Change from Early May to Early June 2020



\*Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a Two-Item Depression Screener. Medical Care. 2003;41:1284-92.

\*\*<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/index.shtml>

## **Dartmouth College-UNH Survey Center New Hampshire COVID-19 Study Methodology**

These findings are based on the **Dartmouth College-UNH Survey Center New Hampshire COVID-19 Study\***, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center in collaboration with the Department of Epidemiology at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. In the most recent iteration of the survey, seven hundred ninety-one (791) Granite State Panel members who had completed the baseline survey in early April completed a survey online between June 1 and June 5, 2020. Data were weighted by respondent sex, age, education, and region of the state to targets from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as party registration levels provided by the New Hampshire Secretary of State. The Granite State Panel is part of an effort by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center to investigate new ways of gathering and understanding the opinion of New Hampshire residents.

Granite State Panel members are recruited from randomly-selected landline and cell phone numbers across New Hampshire. Respondents to the Granite State Poll were asked if they wished to participate in further research and asked to provide an email address. Those who agreed and provided an email address were added to the panel. Panel members were also recruited by texting a random sample of cellular telephones in the state and inviting the recipient to take a short survey.

For each survey which they complete, panel members are entered into quarterly drawings to earn rewards, such as gift certificates from statewide and internet companies. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

For more information about the **Dartmouth College-UNH Survey Center New Hampshire COVID-19** study, please visit:

<https://cola.unh.edu/unh-survey-center/projects/dartmouthunh-covid-19-survey>

For more information about the Granite State Panel, please contact Dr. Andrew Smith at (603) 862-2226 or by email at [andrew.smith@unh.edu](mailto:andrew.smith@unh.edu) or visit:

<https://cola.unh.edu/unh-survey-center/projects/granite-state-panel>

Founded in 1797, the **Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth** strives to improve the lives of the communities it serves through excellence in learning, discovery, and healing. The Geisel School of Medicine is renowned for its leadership in medical education, healthcare policy and delivery science, biomedical research, global health, and in creating innovations that improve lives worldwide. As one of America's leading medical schools, Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine is committed to training new generations of diverse leaders who will help solve our most vexing challenges in healthcare.

The **University of New Hampshire** inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation, and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top-ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. As one of the nation's highest-performing research universities, UNH partners with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, and receives more than \$110 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.